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The Light of Iran
OR
The Coming of Zarathushtra
A NARRATIVE POEM

by

D. M. GORWALLA

Author of "Saarda, the Tale of a Rajput Maid".

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1935.

Printed at The Satya Mitra Press, 74, Hornji Street,
Fort, BOMBAY.

*To All True Zarathushtrians
This Poem
Is Dedicated.*

ઉશ્તા-નો જાતો આથ્રવ યે।
સ્પિતામે જશ્તુસો !

Praise be to the Lord, an Athravan like
Spitam Zarathushtra is born for us !

[Farvardin Yasht. 93, 94.]



ZARATHUSHTRA.

(By Courtesy of Jehangir B Karani's Sons)

PREFACE.

Were it not for my good and kind friend Mr. Barjorji F. Bharucha, this little book would not have seen the light of day. He suggested that I should write a poem on the life of the Holy Prophet Zarathushtra, and it was not without some trepidation that I set about the task, knowing full well how difficult it was to do justice to such a sublime theme. As I went on writing, the story developed itself in my mind, and I made bold to depart from the beaten path—the usual legendary manner in which the life of the Prophet is narrated.

The picture that I have drawn of Zarathushtra praying in his prison cell, an infuriated mob rushing in to kill him and his timely rescue by the arrival of Queen Hutoshi is of course drawn purely from imagination. But there is sufficient material in the different narratives of the life of Zarathushtra that we have with us to lend colour to this picture. From these narratives we know that the Prophet was at one time thrown into prison, and therefore such a scene as I have described is not at all improbable.

I am highly obliged to Professor Jehangir J. Vakil, B. A. (Oxon.), Principal of the Pupils' Own School, Vile Parle, who is himself an able composer of English verses, for writing a foreword to this book and for his valuable suggestions. I can only hope my work will gain such kind appreciation from others as it has from this learned and amiable scholar.

D. M. GORWALLA.

Bombay, 24th June 1935.

SYNOPSIS OF THE STORY.

The opening stanzas narrate the birth of the Prophet Zarathushtra, his youth and manhood, his retirement into solitude, his prayers and meditation, his emergence from the cave to set out on his holy mission, his first appearance before the people and his first sermon.

He proceeds to the court of Vistasp, king of Iran, but his enemies incite the king against him and have him thrown into prison on a false charge of sorcery. The queen Hutoshi is favourably inclined towards Zarathushtra and implores her husband to set him free.

Zarathushtra in his prison cell prays to Ahura Mazda for deliverance. The angel Sarosh appears and bids him keep up his courage. A furious mob, excited by the false stories spread against Zarathushtra by his enemies, rushes into the prison and drags him out with the object of killing him. Queen Hutoshi suddenly arrives upon the scene and checks the murderous rage of the people by rebuking them for such a dastardly outrage on an innocent person. Zarathushtra then addresses the people and calms them by explaining his creed.

He is then taken to the court of king Vistasp. There he answers several questions put to him and interprets a dream seen by the queen. The king is so struck by his eloquence and his revelations that he embraces the Mazdayasni faith along with his family and all the members of the court.

Then there is great rejoicing. A fire-temple is built and Zarathushtra is proclaimed the first *Athravan*.

FOREWORD.

I do not know what kind of reception this little book is going to get from the public, and more especially from the Parsi Community. I cannot, however, refrain from indulging in the hope that there will be many who will experience something of that surprised joy with which I went on from verse to verse of this poem when first it found its way into my hands. My enthusiasm for Indians who desire to write English verse is very worn, but I think that this obscure Parsi poet has enough command over the technique of English verse not to mar, for the refined reader, the theme's interest by the faults of one who has no business to write—or at any rate, publish—English verse.

For the rest, Parsis and other Indians and those Europeans who, because of their interest in what is called 'the wisdom of the East' desire a readable account of what little is known of Zoroaster's life and teachings, and would rather avoid the erudition of the learned and the dust of controversy, will thank the poet for taking them, for a while with him, to the shrine of an ancient teacher,

JEHANGIR J. VAKIL.

The Pupil's Own School,

Vile Parle,

18th March, 1935,

The Light of Iran.



I

Thou land of ancient faiths, thou home of sages,
Whose noble lives the holy ones inspire,
By Ahura Mazda's word, through countless ages,
To guard with ceaseless zeal the sacred fire !
Iran ! Beloved land ! Can I aspire
To sing the glory of thy greatest Sage,
Who, heaven-inspired, at Ahura's own desire,
Gave to the world the Gatha's glowing page,
Where noblest truths the wisest minds engage.

II

Methinks I see a glorious vision rise
Out of the dim and distant past : a band
Of sages, kings and warriors, brave and wise,
Who shed their lustre o'er this hallowed land.
Sublime, in radiance clad, I see them stand ;
But greatest of them all, my eyes behold
The Bactrian Sage, Zarathushtra : in his hand
The wand prophetic and the Book of old
That to the world his flame-born message told.

III

In that fair land where the Vehdaiti flowed,
In Ajarbaijan was the Prophet born.
On Pourushaspa's house¹ the Lord bestowed
His greatest gift one bright and happy morn.
Long had the world, by strife and evil torn,
Prayed for a Saviour who could teach mankind
The ways of Truth and Peace. All sad and worn,
The soul of all Creation² cried to find
Some healing hand its bleeding wounds to bind.

IV

All Nature smiled to great his happy birth.
With gladdening laugh into the world he came ;
The Messenger of Truth upon the earth,
Her guiding-star ; Zor'aster was his name.
All hailed the babe with wonder and acclaim.
His eyes divinely lit, and round his head
The Kyanian halo, with its lambent flame,
A wondrous lustre all about him shed,
Filling the hearts of men with joy and dread.

1. Yasna 9. 13

2. Yasna 29. 1

V

And when to manhood's stature he had grown,
He cast all ties of worldly life away,
And passed his hours in silence and alone,
Communing with the Eternal, night and day.
Within a lonely cave he made his stay,
Upon a lofty mountain's snow-clad peak ;
By prayer and meditation deep, the way
Of highest purity and good to seek,
To aid the strong and guide the erring weak.

VI

And thus he prayed : O Ahura, hear my voice !
¹To Thee in humble prayer my hands I raise.
Grant me this boon, that I may still rejoice,
And full of joy for ever sing Thy praise.
Help me, O Lord, that I may teach the ways
Of purity and good to all mankind.
Bless me, O Lord, in fullness of my days,
With knowledge, power, the comprehending mind,
The highest wisdom by Thy grace to find.

VII

His prayer was heard. By Mazda's grace divine,
To Him the Law harmonious was revealed—
The Law that governs Nature's grand design,
To which all creatures must obedience yield.
The Sage, no longer in his cave concealed,
Upon his sacred mission now set out ;
With Truth for sword, and Virtue for his shield,
A mind determined and a soul devout
That knew no fear, no evil and no doubt.

VIII

It was the time of Nowroze, bright and fair :
In Ajarbaijan were the people gay.
All Nature seemed to smile, and smiling share
The brightness of that bright and happy day.
For Spring was born, and like a child at play
Had strewn her fruits and flowers upon the earth.
In every heart, the joy of life held sway ;
In every home was merriment and mirth,
To greet the Spring, on its auspicious birth.

IX

And while the Jashan feast was at its height,
And song and laughter pleased each merry swain,
They saw a godlike man, clad all in white,
Stand on the mount which overlooked the plain.
So calm, so grave, he stood ; as if to gain
The hearts and minds of that assembled throng ;
And when he spoke, it was so sweet a strain,
As if a poet poured his heart in song,
To roll the tide of eloquence along.

X

It was the Sage, Zarathushtra. By his side
His first disciple Medyomah they saw.
“ Behold, it is the Holy One ! ” they cried,
And gathered round the Sage in wondering awe.
His words of wisdom had the power to draw
The minds of men from darkness unto light ;
And thus he spoke to them of Mazda’s law,
And pointed out the way of truth and right—
The path that leads to heaven’s supreme delight.

XI

1^a To these high counsels hearken with your ears,
And meditate o'er them with reasoning mind,
'Twixt truth and untruth, faith and evil fears,
Choose for yourself the best that you may find.
Ere that great day which carries all mankind
Towards the destined goal to which we tend,
Let each man choose, by his own will inclined,
His own true creed, and on his choice depend :
So may you find fulfilment in the end.

XII

2^a Two principles in Nature are revealed ;
Two primal forces, ever at war, we see ;
The one for good, the one for ill, they wield
Their endless sway thro' all eternity.
The Righteous Mind chose truth and purity ;
Not so the Evil Mind, that takes delight
In ceaseless war and mortal enmity
Against the pure and good, with all its might :
Between these two let wise men choose aright.

1. Yasna 30. 2.
2. Yasna 30. 3, 4, 5.

XIII

" ¹For him who on the righteous path will tread,
 Good Mind and Truth will guide him on his way ;
 But he whose life in evil deeds is led
 Will meet destruction on the fateful day. .
 So cast all evil from your hearts away,
 And join with those who ever strive to reach
 Those realms of light where Wisdom makes her stay.
 The righteous path to all mankind I preach :
 Good thoughts, good words, good deeds is all I teach."

XIV

Thus spoke Zarathushtra, and the people heard,
 As from his lips the speech prophetic flowed.
 With eager ears they drank in every word,
 And every heart with holy fervour glowed.
 To them a new and brighter faith he showed,
 Teaching all men to walk in wisdom's way,
 With strength of heart by Ahura's grace bestowed
 Towards the light, towards the glorious day
²When He will come with faithful ones to stay.

1. Yasna 30. 7, 8, 9.

2 Yasna 43. 6.

XV

“ Bringer of light, Spitam Zarathushtra, hail !
Thrice blessed is the day that gave Thee birth !
Let heart-felt joy and gladness now prevail :
For us a Saviour has been born on earth.
A sacred gift he brings, of matchless worth
To all mankind. Eternal is the flame
That he will light to feed our spirit's dearth,
And countless ages will invoke his name ! ”
Thus cried the people all with loud acclaim.

* * * *

[Zarathushtra now went to the court of Vistasp, King of Balkh, in order to convert him to his faith; but the king, incited by his enemies, who charged him falsely with practicing sorcery, had him thrown into prison.]

XVI

The faith of Mazda, like a radiant star,
On Iranvair its brilliant lustre shed.
Zarathushtra's fame had quickly spread afar,
And now towards the throne his steps were led.
Iran ! thy glorious past is long since dead;
But still the ¹Bard in lays immortal sings
Of ancient power and glory that has fled
With hoary Time upon his silent wings—
The might and splendour of thy Kyanian kings.

¹ Firdausi.

XVII.

Vistasp, the greatest of the Kyanian line,
Sat on his throne, and by his side his queen,
The fair Hutoshi, like a tender vine,
Olung to her lord. So gentle was her mien.
Her dark-blue eyes, like two deep wells unseen,
Were filled with love and mercy. In her heart
A boundless faith that, spurning things unclean,
Strove for a purer being, far apart
From that rude age of uninspired art.

XVIII.

Thus spoke Hutoshi to her royal mate :
"My lord, I know not why so sad I feel;
But I have dreamed a wondrous dream of late,
And none to me its secret can reveal.
Jamasp, the wise, whose potent balms can heal
The deepest wounds, who reads so true and well
The secret of the stars, of human woe and weal,
Not even he my dream can truly tell :
And on my soul is cast some dreadful spell."

XIX.

Then with a pleading look in her dark eyes,
She raised her hands and thus beseeched the king :
“ O my dear lord, a heavy load now lies
Upon my heart, and nought relief can bring.
Alas my lord, we’ve done a sinful thing
To cast that holy man in prison cell.
O free him from his bonds and let him sing
His sacred songs; for he alone can tell
My dream aright and break this magic spell ! ’

XX

“ Joy of my life,” the king replied ; “ these tears
Restrain, and turn thy gloomy thoughts to gay.
Dreams are but shadows of our waking fears
And hopes, which thus their latent strength display
Yet still, fair one, I will not say thee nay ;
But have the Magian from his prison freed.
So cast all sadness from thy heart away,
And call him here to see if he can read
Thy dream aright. I doubt if he’ll succeed.”

XXI

Zarathushtra in his prison cell was praying :
" O Mazda, in this dark and dreadful hour,
1 Revengeful men, their hate and greed betraying,
With frightful looks upon me darkly lower.
Say who can save me from their baneful power
Save Thou, protector of all truth and right ?
O merciful one, on me Thy blessings shower.
To Thee I turn for wisdom and for light,
That I may free my soul from endless night."

XXII

Then on the dungeon's gloom a piercing ray
Of light there dawned ; a mystic voice was heard ;
" Fear not, my son, no terrors can dismay
The faithful soul that trusts my sacred word.
By million foes and dangers undeterred,
Keep on thy way. Let *Sarosh* be thy guard
And *Vohuman* thy strength. Arise and gird
Thy loins for fight. The way is long and hard,
But rich and rare will be thy life's reward."

XXIII

The Prophet knelt upon the stony floor ;
And as he poured his soul in fervent prayer,
There came a sound as of the ocean's roar ;
Loud shouts and angry cries that rent the air.
The door was broken, and a sudden flare
Of smoking torches lit that lonely cell.
A furious crowd rushed in with weapons bare,
Like demons broken loose from darkest hell,
With many a murderous curse and deafening yell.

XXIV.

"Where is the Magian, where the sorcerer vile,
Who by his magic spells and evil art
Has dared our ancient idols to defile ?
We'll kill him now, pluck out his wicked heart !"
A wave of fury swept over every part
Of that vast crowd. They dragged him out to slay ,
And would have slain; but like a lightning dart
There came a queenly form to bar their way;
And with her looks she kept the mob at bay.

XXV

It was the queen Hutoshi. One fair hand
She laid, protecting, on the stricken Sage,
And, with the other lifted in command,
She checked the maddened people's murderous rage.
"O shame!" she cried. "Shame on you thus to wage
This cruel war on one who does no wrong,
The noblest, purest soul of this our age,
Who brings the richest gift for which we long.
Bow down, ye fools, before his heavenly song!"

XXVI

The Sage then lifted up his voice and spoke :
" O sons of men, no magic spells I know
Save Ahura Mazda's name which I invoke
No art save holy manthras I can show.
Let not this fear in vain within you grow
That I have come your temples to defile.
Nay rather have I come, O friends, to throw
The base away, the good to reconcile,
And teach all men to make their lives worthwhile."

XXVII

"This is my creed, this is the truth I preach ;
This message I would give to all mankind :
True happiness is still within your reach ;
To wealth or greatness it is not confined.
For he alone true happiness will find
Who maketh others happy here below.
Ashoi alone is highest good : the mind
And heart that's pure the perfect bliss will know.
Towards perfection let all creatures grow."

XXVIII

Thus spoke the Sage ; the mob, its fury calmed,
Now stood abashed, ashamed of its intent
To kill a man so innocent, unarmed ;
And through its breadth a rumbling murmur went
"He is a holy man by heaven sent.
Behold, a light divine glows on his face !
He speaks in words prophetic that are meant
To be the beacon-lights of man's young race.
Upon his brows there sits a godlike grace."

XXIX.

They bore him thence in triumph to the court,
Where sat King Vistasp on his royal seat.
Hutoshi, smiling, gave the glad report.
And, falling at her royal husband's feet,
She thus implored : " My lord, I now entreat
Your kind protection for this gentle Sage,
This Messenger Divine who comes to greet
The King of Balkh, the noblest of his age,
Whose glory is the pride of Iranvaih."

XXX.

Zarathushtra's voice rang through that spacious hall,
As thus he spoke : " O great and mighty king,
I bring the gift of *Manthra Spent* for all ;
Of Ahura Mazda's might and power I sing.
Behold, all earthly splendour shall take wing
And pass away; but Ahura's sacred fire
Shall burn eternal. He alone can bring
True peace and joy to all who would aspire
Thro' wisdom's way to gain their heart's desire."

XXXI.

Then rose the saintly Jamasp, wise and kind,
And thus he spoke : "Of wisdom's way you speak,
O sage; pray tell us how and where to find
This wisdom; where its dwelling place to seek."
The Sage replied : ¹"On him who aids the weak,
Who shuns the wrong and ever chooses right,
Who lays the gifts of worship, pure and meek,
At Ahura's feet shall beam true wisdom's light
Dear shall he be in Ahura Mazda's sight.

XXXII.

Then spoke Hutoshi, fair and noble queen :
"O holy one, from thee I seek to know
The meaning of this dream that I have seen ;
What portents, glad or fearful, it may show.
I saw an eagle, with its wings aglow,
From the far east come fiercely swooping down ;
Swiftly it came, and with a sudden blow
It snatched away my royal master's crown;
Left on his manly brow a sullen frown.

XXXIII.

“ Away into the east the eagle flew ;
And then two horsemen came upon the plain :
One horse was black, the other heavenly blue,
And round their necks a brilliant, star-like chain.
The eagle they pursued with might and main,
And sped their arrows so they pierced the sky ;
Until at last the evil bird was slain,
And, stained with blood, beneath their feet did lie.
I woke : a shout of joy went up the sky.”

XXXIV.

“ O noble queen, thy dream doth sure foretell
Great things to come in this our glorious land ; ”
Thus spoke the Sage. “ I prithee hear me well,
Thy foes will come to smite on every hand,
Turanian Arjasp, with his warlike band,
Will plunge the land in war and carnage red.
On Jihun's banks, the warm and thirsty sand
Will drink the blood of many a warrior dead.
O King of Balkh, thy glory will have fled !

XXXV.

“ The lustre of thy diadem will pale ;
But only for a while ; for soon the pair¹
With all their might the foeman will assail,
And drive him back towards his mountain lair.
Immortal names these two will ever bear ;
These mighty heroes of the Kyanian line.
Their glory like the stars, beyond compare,
On history's page will everlasting shine.
The choicest gifts of Mazda will be thine.

XXXVI.

“ When on Velhdaiti's banks I stood and prayed
To Ardvisoor her bounteous gifts to lend;
In my great task to give her generous aid,
To bless me with a true and faithful friend ;
As there I saw the foaming waters blend,
There came a voice and told me thou, O King,
With mighty arm my cause will sure defend.
So hither have I come my songs to sing,
And show all men the heavenly gifts I bring.

1. Zarir and Isfandiyar. (See Glossary.)

XXXVII.

“ Say now, O King, is it thy heart's desire
That Mazda's faith in this fair land should spread :
That I may now reveal the sacred fire,
Its soul-uplifting light on men to shed ?
¹To him who of his will, sincerely led,
Becomes my faithful friend, will come true joy,
True fame on earth; in heaven his feet will tread;
The realms of light ; but he who will employ
His strength to break me, will himself destroy.”

XXXVIII.

Thus spoke the Sage and waited for reply.
All eyes were turned towards the royal throne,
As Vistasp, deeply moved, surveyed on high
That solemn scene ; then spoke in earnest tone :
“ Let Ahura Mazda's faith be now my own.
Zarathushtra, loved of Mazda, come to me !
Teach me and mine the Truth that thou hast known.
Let all of us true Mazdayasnis be,
And walk the righteous way of Purity.”

1, Yasna 51. 3, 9, 10.

XXXIX.

A cry of joy rang through the troubled air :
" Long live Vistasp ! Over Iranvair long may
He live to reign ! " Then spake Hutoshi fair :
" Zarathushtra, son of fire, O with us stay,
And set our eager feet upon the way
Of noble thought, true word and shining deed.
O flame-drunk singer, sear with thy pure ray
Of Truth dynamic, all things impure that breed
The myriad shapes of darkness, lust and greed."

XL.

And now from every part of that vast hall
Rang out in joyful tones the glad refrain :
" Zarathushtra, son of fire, stay with us all ;
Be thou our guide spiritual and remain !
O teach us by thy precepts wise to gain
True happiness ; one only God adore ;
From worship of all evil forms abstain.
The Mazdayasni faith for ever more
Will be our faith : towards the light we soar."

XLI.

In all the land of Balkh was joy and mirth.
From far and near the people gathered round
To see the sacred fire, now brought on earth ;
Such as of old Prometheus never had found.
And now, upon a high and verdant mound,
A stately fane they built, and there installed
The holy flame upon its altar crowned.
That fire, by men, was *Adar Burgin* called ;
And thus they prayed by deep devotion thrall'd :

XLII.

“ O fire of *Burgin Mehr*, long mayest thou burn, ;
Symbol of Ahura's grace and power divine.
Thy flames upsoaring teach our thoughts to turn
Towards *Ashoi* ; for best *Ashoi* is thine.
Long mayest thou burn in this thy sacred shrine,
Illume the souls of men with faith sublime,
In which the best and purest thoughts combine.
May thy effulgent beams in every clime
Their lustre shed, for everlasting time !

XLIII.

“ And thou, O keeper of the sacred fire,
Whom we the first of *Athravans* proclaim,
Spitam Zarathushtra, who, at God's desire,
Into the world with gracious message came !
Long mayest Thou live to win undying fame ;
In peace and honour may thou here abide ;
May countless generations bless thy name ;
And may thy faith sublime spread far and wide
Over all the world, in wisdom's way to guide ! ”

* * * *

XLIV.

Full thirteen hundred years have passed away
Since o'er the seas our exiled fathers sailed,
To seek kind shelter 'neath a foreign sway,—
By cruel foes and dangers dark assailed.
But through it all their courage never failed ;
They kept their faith unsullied, ever bright,
Their strength of heart over mighty odds prevailed;
Through many a storm they kept the fire alight,
On Sanjan's plain or Bahrote's rugged height.

XLV.

And we, their sons, have ever bravely striven
To serve this Hind, our dear adopted land,
To keep the sacred pledge that they had given
When first they set their feet on Sanjan's strand :
To be the friends of Hindustan, and stand
Ever on the side of justice, truth and right ;
To keep the Lord Zarathushtra's first command
To seek the truth, resist all ill with might,
And walk the righteous way in Mazda's sight.

XLVI.

Zarathushtrians, we have striven to keep the flame
Still burning in the land, in many a shrine.
The Light of Mazda guides us still the same ;
From age to age we feel its power divine.
The Gatha's noble truths reveal the sign
Which, from the dim and distant past, has led
All seekers after truth their thoughts to twine
Around this fount of wisdom, and its head :
Eternal is the light the Gathas shed.

XLVII,

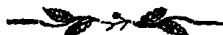
Iran, beloved land ! our eyes still turn
With loving gaze towards thy distant strand.
With fond remembrance still our bosoms burn
To think of thee, our own dear Motherland.
The time may come, when, with a helping hand,
We shall return upon thy soil to stay ;
Where rules the Pahlavi King, at whose command
Iran, re-born, now sees a brighter day.
Long may the land be happy 'neath his sway !

XLVIII.

Iran, beloved land ! I have aspired
To sing the glory of thy greatest Sage.
My humble Muse, by Mazda's love inspired,
Upon this theme has ventured to engage ;
But if these lines could teach a modern age
To seek the truth, which shines as bright as day,
Revealed to men in Gatha's glowing page,
No greater guerdon could I claim to-day :
So may the Light of Mazda guide our way.

THE END.

Glossary of Proper Names.



ADAR BURGİN—One of the three sacred fires mentioned in the Avesta. This fire-temple was erected by King Vistasp after he embraced the Zoroastrian faith. It was built in Khorassan on the Mount Raevant.

AHURA—The Life-giver; God.

AHURA MAZDA—Name used in the Avesta for the Almighty Creator. Both words compounded make Ahurmazda, who is also the first of the Amesha Spentas.

AJARBAIJAN, or Azerbaijan, a province of North Western Persia. It consists generally of lofty mountain ranges, with several rivers which enter the Caspian;

smaller streams falling into the great salt lake of Urumiyah. Present capital is Tabriz. Zarathushtra is supposed to have been born in a place called Rae situated in this province.

ARDBISOOR, called Aban Ardisoor Yazd or Ardisoor Anahita. In Zoroastrian theology each of the four elements has a Yazd or angel presiding over it. Ardisoor is the female Yazd presiding over water. (*ab*=water).

ARJASP, King of Turan, a kingdom situated East of Persia. He fought with King Vistasp who had embraced the Zoroastrian faith. This religious war between Iran and Turan lasted over a period of seventeen years.

At first Arjasp was victorious. The first great battle was fought on the banks of the Jihun or Oxus when the brothers of King Vistasp and many other Irani warriors were slain. But later on Zarir, the nephew of Vistasp, defeated Arjasp in a great battle and took revenge for his father's death. Later on, Isfandiyar Roo-intan, the son of Vistasp, defeated the Turanian completely and freed Iran from the invaders. The exploits of Zarir are related in a Pahlavi book called the "*Yadgare-Zariran*", and the exploits of Isfandiyar are told in the *Shah-nameh* of Firdausi.

ASHOI, (from the Avestan word *Asha*) means Truth, Purity. It denotes perfect purity in thought, word and deed. Fire is said to be the best emblem of purity, because it destroys all impurity and always remains pure.

ATHRAVAN, the highest order of priesthood. Those entrusted with the guardianship of the sacred fire (*athra*=fire) were called Athravans.

BACTRIAN SAGE, Zoroaster is so called because he lived and taught in Bactria, a country of ancient Asia south of the Oxus and reaching to the west of the Hindu Kush.

BAHROTE, a mountain in Gujarat where the Parsis are said to have kept the sacred fire concealed for several years before it was finally removed to Udwada.

BALKH, capital of ancient Bactria. It was long the centre of Zoroastrianism. At present it is a city of some importance in Afghan Turkestan.

BURGIN MEHR, see Adar Burgin.

GATHAS, the sacred songs of Zarathushtra (*ga*=to sing). Of these five books are extant, which are named Ahunvad, Ushtvad Spentomad, Vohushathra and Vahistoist. The Gathas served as the actual texts of the sermons that Zarathushtra himself delivered before the people who came from far and near to hear him speak.

HUTOSHI, wife of King Vistasp. She played the same part in the spread of the Zoroastrian faith in ancient Iran as was played by Queen Emma in the introduction of Christianity by the reigning St. Augustine. In the *Gosh Yasht* (Yasna 5-26) Zarathushtra is represented as praying that he may be able to convert the good Queen Hutoshi to his faith so that she may help him in his work of spreading the new gospel.

IRAN, ancient name of Persia.

IRANVAIJ. The original home of the Aryan race is supposed to be somewhere in Central Asia. Of this race one branch migrated to India, which was called *Aryavaij*, the land of the Aryans; and another branch migrated to Iran, which was called *Iranvairj*, land of the Iranians.

JAMASP, the prime minister of King Vistasp. He is called Jamasp *Hakim* on account of his great skill in the art of healing; also Jamasp 'the wise', on account of his sagacity and knowledge of astrology. He is supposed to be the author of the book called *Jamaspi* containing remarkable predictions of future events. He was the first to embrace the Mazdayasnan faith and greatly assisted Zarathushtra in spreading it. His name is mentioned in the Vohushathra Gatha, (Yasna 51, 18

JASHAN, a feast or festival celebrated at different times of the year, particularly to mark the changes of seasons. Literally it means "coming together and hearing," because people gathered from all parts to hear the prayers recited on the occasion.

JIHUN or Jaihun, also called Oxus, Amu, or Amu Dariyah, a large river, of Central Asia. The first great battle between Vistasp King of Iran, and Arjasp, King of Turan, is described in the Shah Nameh as having taken place near the banks of this river.

KYANIAN KINGS, dynasty of kings who ruled over ancient Persia. The first dynasty was the Peshdadian, the second the Kyanian. Vistasp was the fourth and greatest of this dynasty. The Kyanian kings on account of their great

magnificence and virtue are described as having a halo round their heads. This halo is frequently praised in the Avesta as "the magnificent Kyanian halo" (ઉધરેમ કવએમ ખરેને) (*Jamyad Yast*, paras 70-71.)

MAGIAN, pl. Magi, the hereditary priests among the Medes and Persians, set apart to manage the sacred rites, acting also as diviners and astrologers. In course of time the name magi came to be associated with astrology and enchantment. Zarathushtra was also called a Magian, but in reality he was opposed to the evil and corrupt practises of the Magi and strove to reform them. Like all other reformers, he thereby created many and powerful enemies, who incited the King Vistasp against him by falsely charging him with sorcery and black magic, and had him thrown into prison.

MANTHRA SPENT, the holy prayers (mantras) of the Avesta.

MAZDA, the possessor of knowledge; the All-knowing; God.

MAZDAYASNAN, a follower of the faith of Mazda, as opposed to *Dævyasnan*, a worshipper of demons or idols.

MEDYOMAH, the first disciple of Zoroaster was also his cousin. He is the St. Paul of Zoroastrianism. His name is mentioned in the Vohushathra Gatha. (Yasna 51.19.)

NOWROZE, New Year Day. A feast celebrated in Persia from the time of King Jamshid and therefore called Jamshedi Nowroze. This day falls on the 21st. of March and synchronises with the advent of Spring.

POURUSHASPA, the father of Zarathushtra.

Literally the name means "owner of many horses"

PROMETHEUS, in Greek mythology, one of the Titans who brought fire from heaven to men, and having incurred the wrath of Zeus was chained by Vulcan on a rock of the Caucasus.

SANJAN, a small port of Gujarat where the Parsis are first said to have landed after their flight from Iran. Jadi Rana, a Hindu king, gave them refuge on certain conditions and they settled down in Gujarat.

SAROSH, one of the Yazds. In Zoroastrian theology Sarosh is the guardian Angel, protecting the faithful from all harm and guarding the world from evil. Sarosh is also the giver of knowledge or inspiration.

SPITAM, See Zarathustra.

VEHDAITI, a river of Azerbaijan frequently mentioned in the Avesta ; probably one of the numerous small streams falling into the great lake Urumiyah. According to a Pahlavi narrative, when Zarathushtra came to this river at the place of its junction with four other rivers, he prayed to Ahuramazda and to Ardivisoor for help. The Amesha Spentas then appeared to him and guided him safely over the waters.

VISTASP, the fourth and greatest King of the Kyanian dynasty. Came to the throne after his father Lohrasp who retired into solitude. Embraced the Zarathushtrian faith and sent his brothers and sons to spread it throughout Iran. His name is mention-

ed in the Vohushathra Gatha (Yasna 51.16)

VOHUMAN or Behman. Good Mind, is the second of the Amesha Spentas, ranking next to Ahuramazda. After *Asha*, Purity, Good Mind is the next attribute of godhead.

ZARATHUSHTRA, the Avestan name of the Prophet. He was called Spitam or Spentman Zarathushtra because the paternal cognomen of his family was Spitam, also called the House of *Haechat-aspa*. (Vahistoist Gatha Yasna 58. 3)

ZARATHUSTRIANS—Followers of Zarathushtra, the Parsis.

ZOROASTER the Greek name of the Prophet (*aster*=star). It is recorded that when Zoroaster was born he laughed

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